

More Research? Are you kidding?

Recently, the Every Canadian Counts Coalition met with Minister Qualtrough to discuss the way forward in the desire to provide better disability supports for Canadians. The Coalition emphasized that if we are to go forward there would need to be more research to get to where we wanted to go.

The reactions were wide ranging with a number expressing exasperation that this was yet another ruse in place of real action; that the situation had been studied to death and there was little patience for more and even that Every Canadian Counts must be advocacy this because it was paid to do so. (On the last point, the Every Canadian Counts Coalition is an entirely volunteer based non-profit organization).

What was not addressed in the statement about research was some clarity about what it was we wanted researched. It is this. The Every Canadian Counts Coalition wants research into the feasibility, viability and desirability of a national disability insurance plan. This is in recognition that such an idea is new to Canada, there is no design to the plan, and there are no cost/benefit analyses in place for such a plan. There is no understanding of how federal/provincial interactions would occur under such a plan, and how it would affect existing disability insurance regimes, many privately held, nor what the criteria would be to be included in such a plan especially given the wide-ranging disparities in current provincial delivery systems. The questions that need to be answered before launching this major plan, and by major we are talking many billions of dollars.

The research will serve many purposes, not the least of which is engaging and familiarizing the wider Canadian public to the idea – an idea they will all pay for. It will also allow us to change the discourse surrounding disabilities because the plan will not be seen as ‘welfare’ but investment – investment in people for the future.

So please bear with us. If this is to be done right, we must be clear headed with an ability to act based on good understandings. Research is the essential first step.